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HEAT STRESS POLICY

Strategic Outcome:	Good government	
Policy type	Administrative	
Date of Adoption:	19 September 2022	Minute Number: ELT
Date for Review:	19 September 2026	
Responsible Officer:	Enterprise and Risk Manager	
Document Control:	Replaces Heat Stress Policy adopted 19/11/2014	
Delivery Program Link:	2.1.3 Council operations and financial management support ethical, transparent, and accountable corporate governance	

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Berrigan Shire Council acknowledges its responsibilities under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* to provide as far as reasonably practicable, a healthy and safe workplace for all Council workers, and will eliminate exposure to extreme heat or adopt control measures to minimise exposure wherever elimination is not possible.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to all workers when working in heat, to understand the health implications for working in extreme conditions, and to implement control measures when required.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies:

- to all workers of the Berrigan Shire Council including volunteers and contractors; and
- generally, to work situations involving manual activities performed outdoors, or work involving the generation of heat.

4. OBJECTIVE

This policy is developed to assist the Council with the Delivery Program Objective:



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2.1.3 Council operations and financial management support ethical, transparent and accountable corporate governance.

5. DEFINITIONS

Heat discomfort is what many people feel when it is hot. It is not a medical condition like heat stress and therefore is not considered a risk to health.

Heat stress results when the body is unable to sufficiently cool itself enough to maintain a healthy temperature, and usually requires a combination of risk factors. Those factors include:

- temperature;
- humidity;
- amount of air movement;
- radiant temperature of surroundings;
- clothing;
- physical activity; and
- poor health

Hot days in accordance with the Bureau of Meteorology, hot days are considered when temperatures reach or exceed 35°C.

Very hot days in accordance with the Bureau of Meteorology, very hot days are considered when temperatures reach or exceed 40°C.

Workers A worker, in accordance with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* is a person who carries out work in any capacity for a PCBU including work as an employee, volunteer, contractor, sub-contractor, work experience student or trainee.

6. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Identifying heat stress risk

Working in heat may be as a result of working outdoors in hot weather or where heat is generated as part of a work activity. People who work indoors or do light work are unlikely to suffer from heat stress and any discomfort caused by increased temperatures can be managed by:

- increasing air movement;

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- providing air conditioning (where practical);
- providing access to cool water; and
- wearing suitable loose-fitting clothing.

Workers involved in manual activities conducted outdoors are at greater risk of developing heat stress. When identifying who is at risk, the type of workload must be identified.

Workload types		
Heavy	Medium	Light
Manual work involving repetition and the use of very high force such as digging, jackhammering, sawing, shovelling, etc.	Manual work where machinery can be utilised limiting physical exertion such as lawn mowing, forklift operation, backhoe operation, line marking, etc.	Manual work or supervisory work requiring very little physical exertion such as litter collection, preparing signs, and inspection and testing regimes.
Manual work involving the use of spark-creating equipment such as chainsaws, blowtorches, pneumatic equipment, concrete saws, etc.		Work that can be relocated indoors such as cleaning workspaces or amenities, bookwork, etc.
Physical work such as concreting, spraying, laying pipes, etc.		Lifeguard operations

6.2 Heat stress management plan

To minimise the effects of hot weather on workers and the Council's work program, management and overseers must monitor expected weather conditions and plan accordingly.

6.2.1 Responsibilities

Temperatures will be monitored by the relevant manager or overseer during hot days with reference to the Bureau of Meteorology forecasts, and NSW Health heatwave alerts, to ascertain the predicted temperatures scheduled over the working week. The manager or overseer will then make any necessary arrangements to reduce the risks to workers.



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The Deputy CEO/Director Corporate Services, and Recreation Officer will ensure lifeguards and Volunteer Committees of Council are adequately informed of Council procedures for working in extreme conditions.

Workers are responsible for advising managers or overseers of conditions that may increase the risk of heat stress.

Management of heat stress is a shared responsibility between management and each individual.

6.2.2 Temperature monitoring and risk management

Outdoor temperatures and relative humidity in Berrigan Shire vary significantly. Extra care must be taken on hot days and very hot days, and on days where humidity is high.

These guidelines are in place to:

- assist managers and overseers in assessing workloads against forecasted temperatures and conditions;
- program work and decide upon control measures to be adopted; and
- reduce the risk of heat stress on workers.

Upon reviewing temperature and humidity forecasts, managers and overseers will consult workers involved in heavy or medium workloads, at various forums such as tool box meetings and site meetings, to set break times and discuss additional measures if required.

Measures to be implemented will be documented on the Site Specific Risk Assessment/Tool Box Meeting Record, signed by relevant workers, and included on Safe Work Method Statements, where applicable.

Works are not permitted to proceed on a days identified as high risk (high temperatures and high humidity) without the Site-Specific Risk Assessment/Tool Box Meeting record completed, addressing additional control measures, and signed by all workers.

6.2.3 Personal risk factors

People respond differently to heat, and some workers may experience distress or symptoms of heat stress at lower temperatures and humidity. This may be due to several risk factors including:

- poor physical fitness;



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- obesity;
- pre-existing medical conditions or treatments;
- use of medication, and / or
- chronic skin disorders

Under these circumstances, workers are encouraged to speak with their manager, overseer or ganger to arrange additional or alternative measures.

Operators of air-conditioned plant or equipment and staff working in air-conditioned buildings are exempt from increased break times or inclusion in the heat stress management plan.

6.2.4 Heat stress management control measures

The Tool Box Meeting Record will outline additional control measures to be implemented to manage heat stress.

Actions which may influence work and measures adopted for heat stress management include the following:

- where possible, flexibility in starting times will be considered along with work programming/planning to enable the programmed works to be completed before the forecast hottest part of the day.
- the expected duration of excessively high temperatures should be considered before the workload is programmed with alternative arrangements considered such as using plant instead of manual labour.
- workers should be reassigned to light duties as the temperature increases and subsequently when the temperature drops, heavy or medium workloads can be resumed.
- workers whose duties require them to be outside must wear protective clothing and equipment provided. This includes wearing Council clothing (where issued), hat, sunglasses and sunscreen.
- all vehicles will be fitted with air-conditioning where practicable.
- additional break times will be provided.



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- wherever possible, shade will be provided or alternatively shaded areas will be identified for those staff whose duties require them to be outside.
- job rotation particularly for traffic controllers during roadworks will be made available where possible. This will allow workers an opportunity to work from air-conditioned plant for longer periods.
- Depot lunchrooms will be fitted with air-conditioning where practical or appropriate.
- drink bottles are made available for all outdoor workers. All workers have access to cool water prior to works commencing and throughout the day. For remote worksites, workers will be given the opportunity to refill their drink bottles if required, or where this is difficult, alternatives will be made available such as the provision of bottled water.
- information regarding working in heat and recognising the symptoms of heat stress is issued to all outdoor workers including volunteers.

6.2.5 Contractual/emergency obligations

All works that have commenced and have subsequently halted due to extreme temperatures/conditions, need to be completed or made safe as a minimum requirement.

In the case of an emergency situation, works shall continue. An emergency roster will be developed to ensure sufficient staff are present to enable appropriate breaks to be taken.

7. RELATED LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

7.1 Legislation

- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2017*
- *Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998*
- AS ISO 31000:2018 Risk management – Guidelines
- Local Government (State) Award 2020

7.2 Council policies and guidelines

- Code of Conduct



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- Work Health and Safety Policy
- Clothing and Protective Equipment Policy
- Pre-employment Medical Policy
- Risk Management Policy and Framework
- Workplace Rehabilitation Policy

8. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

All Records must be kept in accordance with Council's Records Management Policy (currently under development) and destroyed as per the General Retention and Disposal Authority: Local Government Records (GA39).

9. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

This policy (procedure) will be evaluated and reviewed at least once every four (4) years as per Council's Governance Policy (currently under development) or as required.

10. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY

A number of legislative instruments require Councils to have the policy available for inspection at Council's principal office (i.e. Policies made under Part 3, of the *Local Government Act 1993*). Each document should therefore state the ways in which the policy is available including any relevant fees and charges for access to such policy. An example of the required statement is provided below:

This policy will be available for inspection at Council's principal office during ordinary business hours as per the requirements of section 18 (c) of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* and section 167 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Access to the policy in digital format is free and is available on Council's website <https://www.berriganshire.nsw.gov.au/>

Printed copies of the document are available at Council's principal office (address noted below) and are subject to Council's Fees and Charges.

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11. VERSION CONTROL

Version Number	Date	Summary	Responsible Officer
1.0		New Policy document	Michelle Koopman
1.1		Minor review – new template	Michelle Koopman

APPENDICES